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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 MAPUTO 000075

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [KDEM](#) [MA](#) [MZ](#)

SUBJECT: CHISSANO ON MADAGASCAR: MUST PRESSURE THE FRENCH

REF: 09 MAPUTO 1042

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires Todd Chapman for reasons 1.4 (b+d)

11. (C) SUMMARY: In a January 21 meeting, Former President and SADC Special Negotiator for Madagascar Joachim Chissano told the Charge that he commended the United States for its position on Madagascar, suspension of AGOA, and termination of the MCC Compact. Chissano said that SADC leaders decided in the January 14 Troika meeting in Maputo to ask France to stop supporting TGV, allowing for progress towards a transitional government. Chissano believes the key to breaking the current stalemate is halting France's support of TGV. Chissano believes that only when TGV is convinced that French support is weakening will he reconsider his options. Therefore, Chissano believes that Paris should be the focus of USG and European engagement on Madagascar. It is evident from this meeting that Chissano remains well-informed and committed to continued engagement as a mediator in Madagascar. With the recent support he received from SADC leaders, Chissano is available for further consultation with USG officials, something he said he would welcome. END SUMMARY.

CHISSANO COMMENDS U.S. POSITION

12. (C) On January 21, the Charge and Poloff met with President Chissano and his former Foreign Minister Leonardo Simao about the Madagascar political situation. Chissano supported the U.S. position on the suspension of Madagascar's AGOA eligibility and the MCC compact and appreciated his interaction with USG interlocutors at the Addis meeting in early January. The Charge provided Chissano with a copy of AF DAS Karl Wycoff's January 15 interview from America.gov and Chissano said he valued USG support for the SADC position and him personally.

AU PROPOSAL SAID TO BE FAIR

13. (C) Chissano did not detail AU Commission Chairman Jean Ping's proposal delivered January 21 in Antananarivo, but said it defines a fair distribution of prominent positions within the proposed transitional government in an effort to build consensus. Chissano noted that his assistant from the Foreign Ministry (MINEC), Nuno Tomaz was in Antananarivo with Chairman Ping. Chissano said that the international community should continue to work together to persuade all

movements to adhere to the principals of the agreements made in Maputo and Addis and develop a credible transition plan.

EUROPEANS NEED TO BE STRONGER AGAINST TGV

¶4. (C) Chissano was visibly frustrated by France's position in support of TGV. He said French expatriates in Madagascar have established a direct link to President Sarkozy and convinced him that the best course for French interests is to support TGV. Chissano explained that as long as TGV was confident of French support, he would continue to be inflexible towards the other three movements and continue pushing for non-inclusive elections. The French are attempting to persuade the international community that TGV's proposed elections will be representative of the "voice of the people," a claim which Chissano said he, SADC and the AU rejected.

¶5. (C) When asked about any other ideas about next steps or new approaches, Chissano said that, besides France, Rajoelina (TGV) also listens to Germany, which has not been sufficiently involved in the political situation in Madagascar. He suggested that the Germans engage to also recommend consensus-building between TGV and the other movements. Chissano commended the EU for "turning off the tap" of assistance to Madagascar. He mentioned that in recent negotiations the EU found itself in the difficult position of partially supporting the SADC and AU position on Madagascar, while at the same time not wanting to anger the

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French.

¶6. (C) While declaring TGV to be the main reason for the stalemate, he asserted that the other three movements are also sometimes being inflexible in their demands, particularly in regards to ministerial positions in the new transitional government. For example, Chissano said Zafy's demands for the Ministries of Energy and Mines were a non-starter. Chissano commented that in the recent discussions in Maputo, the three movements feared giving away too many powerful ministries to TGV, but Chissano tried to point out to them that these ministerial assignments would be of a short duration and should not be the cause for deterring a lasting political solution.

¶7. (C) Turning to the SADC Troika meeting on January 14 in Maputo following President Guebuza's inauguration, Chissano said that there was agreement for SADC to quietly contact the French and formally ask them to halt their support for TGV. The SADC leaders were resolved to maintain SADC engagement and to call for all movements to stick to what was agreed to in Maputo and Addis.

COMMENT: CHISSANO FRUSTRATED, MOSTLY WITH FRANCE

¶8. (C) Chissano, clearly frustrated with the pace of the Madagascar negotiations, believes that only when TGV is convinced that French support is weakening will he reconsider his options. Therefore, Chissano believes that Paris should be the focus of USG and European engagement. He never took a direct shot at Ping, but only commented that the AU proposal was very similar to the Maputo agreements and he looked forward to learning of the result of his meetings. If Chissano felt slighted by the AU in Addis in early-January, he did not make those feelings apparent. It is evident from this meeting that Chissano remains well-informed and committed to continued engagement as a mediator in Madagascar. With the recent support he received from SADC leaders, Chissano is available for further consultation with USG officials, something he said he would welcome.

CHAPMAN